

# Update



November 2017

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## Building peace, from local to global

*Report of NFPB's meeting in Darlington on 14th October*

The remit of NFPB is to promote 'peace in all its height and breadth'. The range of issues addressed at our most recent meeting in Darlington shows the continuing relevance of this brief.

As with many of our meetings, we like to link with local peace initiatives. On this occasion we invited Peter and Carol Greenwood to talk about the **White Rose Group in Darlington**, which they set up as an alternative response to far-right bigotry. Inspired by the words of Jo Cox – '*we have more in common than that which divides*', the group is developing a range of activities to put those words into action in the town. After Carol and Peter's input, we explored in greater depth issues about how we engage in our different communities, from personal encounters to group-level activities. See: <https://www.whiterosedarlington.com/>

From the local to the global... NFPB member Janet Fenton has been active in the International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons since it was set up. NFPB had supported Janet in getting to New York for the negotiations earlier this year that led to the agreement of the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** (known informally as the Nuclear Ban Treaty). She was there again the week before we met, exploring possibilities of specific work on nuclear

disarmament in the Middle East. Janet outlined the possibilities that the Treaty now presents for national and international action to put into place the components of a nuclear free world.

The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the campaign is particularly welcome, Janet emphasised, in helping raise the profile of a Treaty that so much of the established media have decided not to report on. It will also give the campaign both encouragement and resources to take the campaign forward, turning the treaty into reality. Janet thanked NFPB for their support and gave advance notice of an international demonstration that is being planned, to take place around Faslane next September. See: <http://www.nuclearban.scot/>

NFPB has normally had four meetings a year. In 2017 we have had three, taking into account a particularly busy autumn of competing events, as well as our involvement in the Yearly Meeting Gathering. Members agreed to resume the pattern of four meetings for each of the next two years.

We closed, as we had gathered, in worship, thanking Friends who have served the Board in different capacities and who will be completing their time as Representatives at the end of 2017.

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## Peace talks – in York

In October, Wayne Sharrocks, a young former soldier and member of Veterans for Peace from Leeds was the first speaker in York Quakers' new series of Peace Talks. Later in the series. questions around protest and social action will be addressed by parties involved in fracking protests in Ryedale, including a police officer (November). In January the crisis in our prison system will be discussed by a retired prison governor and a prison officer. Finally, in February, a former inmate of Guantanamo Bay will talk about the rise of ISIS and its impact in the UK.

For information of these and other events, visit our website calendar: <http://nfpb.org.uk/calendar> – and please send news for us to share here and to circulate.

## Talking Peace Postively

This was the title of the workshop we facilitated at Colwyn Bay Meeting House at the beginning of Quaker Week, on 1<sup>st</sup> October. The workshop was attended by local Friends and Attenders, as well as participants from peace and Amnesty groups. Looking at current peace challenges and concerns, the group was encouraged to explore differences in our understanding and in our responses, and to identify some of the root causes of violent conflict.

In speaking out and taking action for peace, are the roles of prophet and reconciler mutually supportive, or contradictory? Recognising the fears and insecurities that are behind many areas of tension and conflict, how can the way we engage with people help or get in the way of positive change? The group reflected on the

need for giving space and time for listening and conversation as well as for speaking out. Coupled with this, the group challenged itself in reflecting on how willing we are to be changed ourselves, through the process of dialogue and conversation.

Similar themes were explored in a talk that NFPB Coordinator Philip Austin gave at an away-day for Friends from Pickering and Hull Area Meeting in September

For more information about our workshops, download our workshops leaflet here: <http://tinyurl.com/y8m3eh8v>

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## Witnessing against the arms trade

NFPB members in Huddersfield, Bolton and Chester are amongst those who have been active locally in holding and contributing to vigils concerned with arms exports to Saudi Arabia. NFPB members and other Friends were also present throughout the recent trial of Quaker Sam Walton and Methodist Dan Woodhouse, for the action they took in January to try to disarm aircraft at BAE Warton in Lancashire, destined for Saudi Arabia and expected to be used in the war in Yemen. The two were acquitted, as the district judge found that they had acted reasonably to prevent the weapons being used against the infrastructure of Yemen. And in September, Friends from NFPB joined with others from across the country throughout the week of action against the DSEi arms fair in London. See: <https://www.caat.org.uk/campaigns/stop-arming-saudi>



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## One-person rainbow peace banner kits now available again

We are grateful to NFPB member Allison Challen for her work in putting together a new set of kits with the fabric and instructions for making your own one-person banner. These were initially the idea of Caroline Westgate and we have sold kits for the last 16 years, with Friends adapting them for different purposes. Thank you Caroline!

The kits are available for £10 each – contact the NFPB office (see over the page)

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## Concern about militarism

North Scotland Area Meeting Friends recently hosted Michael Elstub of Veterans for Peace UK, as well as organising a public meeting at which he spoke.

We were represented at the recent launch event for the new *Take Action on Militarism* resource pack in London and look forward to supporting Friends in their continued activities on this.

Friends in Yorkshire and in Scotland, meanwhile, have been giving white poppies to members of the public and of the Scottish parliament respectively. Whilst in Derbyshire, NFPB member Lyn Pardo has been in the press regarding the refusal by the organisers of a remembrance event in Chesterfield to allow a white poppy wreath to be laid. See: <http://vfpuk.org/>  
<https://www.forceswatch.net/takeaction/>